**Loving Our Neighbors**

**Listening to the Apostle of Love**

**Tangible Love**

3 characteristics of love that is easily recognizable by others

**I. Tangible Love Avoids the Sins of Cain – vv. 3:11-12 (cf. Genesis 4:1-14)**

**1 John 3:11-12** - *For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain…*

A. Disobedience to God’s command

**1 John 3:12** - *…and for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother’s were righteous.*

**Hebrews 11:4** - *By faith, Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.*

**Genesis 4:5** - …*but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.*

**Genesis 4:6-7** - *Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? “If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.”*

B. Selfish and stubborn response to confrontation

**Proverbs 10:8** - *The wise of heart will receive commands, but a babbling fool will be ruined.*

**Proverbs 12:15** - *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel.*

**Proverbs 15:5** - *A fool rejects his father’s discipline, but he who regards reproof is sensible.*

C. Unrestrained violence

**Genesis 4:8** - *…and it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.*

D. Portraying oneself inappropriately as the victim

**Genesis 4:13** - *Cain said to the Lord, “My punishment is too great to bear!”*

**II. Tangible Loves Talks Less and Does More**

A. In a way that is alive – **vv. 3:13-16**

**1 John 3:14** - *We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.*

**Romans 6:11-14** - *Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.*

“Becoming a Christian is nothing less than a resurrection or a ‘quickening’ out of spiritual death and into spiritual life” (John Stott).

B. In a way that is attentive to needs – **v. 17**

**1 John 3:17** - *But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?*

C. In a way that is active – **v. 3:18**

**1 John 3:18** - *Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.*

“It is easier to be enthusiastic about Humanity with a capital `H’ than it is to love individual men and women, especially those who are uninteresting, exasperating, depraved, or otherwise unattractive. Loving everybody in general may be an excuse for loving nobody in particular” (C. S. Lewis).

D. In a way that is convincing – **vv. 3:19 - 22**

**1 John 3:19-21** - *We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;*

1. to them

2. to ourselves

“For John, therefore, the differences between Satan’s children and God’s children could not be more distinct. Those who murder, habitually hate, or are chronically self-centered and indifferent to the needs of others do not have eternal life. But those who, as part of their repentance from sin and trust in Christ, have renounced murderous, hateful attitudes and all cold, selfish indifference to the needs of others give evidence that they have been born again. In place of those sinful traits, Christians manifest genuine love to others, especially fellow believers (Romans 12:10-13; Galatians 6:10), because of the love of God shed abroad in their hearts. They sincerely obey James’s injunction: “Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world” (James 1:27; cf. 2:8, 15-17) (John MacArthur, Commentary on 1 John).

**III. Tangible Love Depends on the Power of God**

**1 John 3:24** - *The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.*